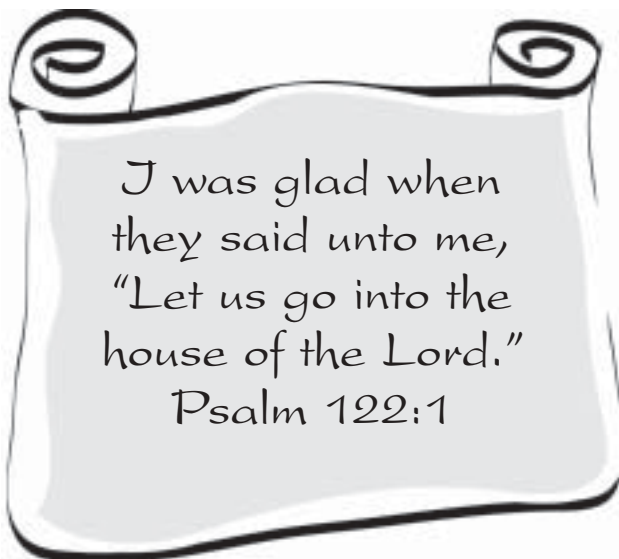


Vista 2001

*A Publication of The General Council of the Christian Church of North America
Anno Domini 2001 – Volume 2, No. 4*

We Believe . . .

THE Bible to be the infallible Word of God † In One God, distinct in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit † Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Son of God, the Only Savior of mankind, through whose death atonement was made for our sins † In a personal devil, served by demon spirits, who will be cast eternally into the Lake of Fire † In regeneration: the new birth through faith in Jesus Christ † In Water Baptism by simple immersion “*in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit*” † In the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to salvation, with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance † In the Lord’s Supper to be shared in regularly as a reminder of our Lord’s death † In the Apostolic regulations regarding practices that injure the body and offend the holiness of God † In the healing of the sick in response to the prayer of faith † In the pre-millennial return of Jesus Christ † In the bodily resurrection of the dead.



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IN THIS ISSUE

General Overseer's Message	4
<i>Charting CCNA into the Future</i>	
In Memorium	5
<i>Rev. James DeMola</i>	
CCNA Education Department	6
<i>Rev. Lucian Gandolfo</i>	
In Remembrance	7
<i>Mrs. Vivian Prestigiacomio</i>	
Evangelism	8
<i>Rev. James Cassidy</i>	
World Missions	9
Your Health Advisory	10
<i>Stem-cell Research: The Real Deal</i>	
It's In the Bible	11
<i>Israel 101</i>	
Convention 2001	12
<i>A Report</i>	
District News	14
Bits 'n Pieces	15
Science and the Bible	18
<i>"Uncle Vince" Immordino</i>	
Home Missions	21
<i>Church Planting</i>	



ISA

MEMBER



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of
EVANGELICALS



Editorial

“GOD BLESS AMERICA”



HOW would you punctuate that phrase? Most would put an exclamation (!) at the end. This is certainly where it belongs if it is meant to emphasize a sincere desire on the part of a people to return in humility to their heavenly Father asking for His blessings and mercy. Some, however, view the phrase as a mere patriotic slogan where the emphasis is on “America” rather than God. (This is the use approved by the Supreme Court when it is “lawfully” displayed in a public school.)

Christians who have strived to point out some of this country's wrongs created by abortion, its propensity towards “inclusiveness” which has resulted in the acceptance of sin, deviant life-styles, and a total watered-down form of patriotism so as to exclude God, may chose to punctuate it with a question mark: *God Bless America?*

We, as a nation, have found it most convenient to consider ourselves to be “*one nation under God*” at times of crisis—calling on Him to deliver His people, as did ancient Israel when it found itself under siege or oppressed by its enemies. God was always faithful. He delivered His people, but only after they turned to Him having confessed their sins and repented. The enemies of ancient Israel were always soundly defeated, that is, until Israel's next apostasy.

We must remember that America is not ancient Israel. God is sovereign over America only by invitation! Our representative form of government may:

- submit to God,
- pick-and-choose principles upon which to both govern the people and seek the favor of God, or,
- attempt to separate itself from all religious influences as a secular society.

It should come as no news that the trend over the past 50 years has been towards the latter.

Americans in increasing numbers are seeking the favor of God in view of our war against terrorism. Although America is not ancient Israel we can certainly learn from mistakes made in the past. II Chronicles 7:14 says,

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

How we as a people need to do just that! This promise of God was spoken to Solomon and was fulfilled time and time again during the days of the Judges. Paul said it differently:

Editorial is continued on p. 24

Announcing: The 95th Anniversary of the

Christian Church of North America

At next year's 75th Annual Convention we will celebrate our 95th Anniversary as a movement of God. A special anniversary journal is being prepared. Your assistance is needed. Please search for any CCNA memorabilia that you feel might be appreciated and send it to CCNA Headquarters. Articles, publications, photographs, histories, or mementos would be greatly appreciated!

AMERICA'S WAKE-UP CALL!

THE bombing of the World Trade Center by terrorists was a wake-up call for America, and especially for the Church. It is the voice of God calling for the Church to take inventory of her foundations in the Word of God, and the stability in her relationship with the Lord.

The time has come for God's people to take time out of their very busy schedules to pray. We need to pray for:

1. the victims and families, all officials, medical personnel and rescue teams,
2. peace for America in the midst of national crisis, (Psalm 4:6)
3. supernatural wisdom for President Bush, staff advisors, and for those who have authority over the U.S. Senate, Congress and Cabinet,
4. God to use this tragedy for His glory, (Romans 8:28)
5. the terrorists to come to know the true God.



This is a great opportunity to call for special prayer in your church, bringing God's people together, praying for America and for the needs of the church. We need to remember that *"our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus Christ is His righteousness."* There is always hope in tragedy and in the midst of tragedy there is opportunity for the Church to shine.

Let us remember that *"on Christ the Solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand."*

Let us come together in corporate prayer, praying for America and for CCNA. Let us pray for genuine revival, brining the church together in unity, letting our light shine in the midst of darkness!

Let this great tragedy in America awaken us and drive us to God in prayer. Let us accept this wake-up call as the voice of God to draw near to Him!

Let us prayer for one another.

Rev. John DelTurco





“A Firm Foundation”

Charting CCNA into the Future

Rev. John DeTurco, General Overseer

CCNA 95th ANNIVERSARY 1907 - 2002

It is most appropriate that anniversaries should be observed. When God provided for Israel’s deliverance from Egypt He requested that Israel establish an anniversary of this event. It was called the Passover, and each year devout Jews remind themselves and teach their children about this great event in history. The Christian calendar also has anniversaries such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost.

As the people of the Christian Church of North America come to their 95th Anniversary they cannot help but exclaim, “What God hath wrought!” CCNA has received many special blessings from God past on from generation to generation, but the greatest blessings are people who have been saved by God’s grace; who have been filled with the Spirit; whose lives manifest the fruits—the power, and the gifts of the Spirit.

These blessings all around the world not only remind us of what God had done, but of what He will still do as humble believers surrender themselves to God in total commitment.

THE FAMILY HERITAGE

When I think of the impressive leaders from another era, it makes me remember with pride, the host of our pioneer fathers of the CCNA. According to what I read from our history, and according to what I have heard from many of our elderly, the thing that really stands out is not their great education, or their great background as leaders, but rather, . . .

- the great Pentecostal heritage,
- the message they preached,
- the doctrine they established,
- the examples of faith, and,
- the lasting quality of work they did.

Many of the early pioneers were not “great”, as the world measures greatness. They were itinerant preachers traveling from town to town preaching salvation, healing and the baptism in the Holy Spirit and starting many churches. Some lived on a meager income, preached in shacks, in tents, and almost always on the other side of the tracks. Often persecuted and rejected, they carried their message with dynamic power and love. With sweat on their brow and dirt on their clothes they continued the work because they had Jesus in their hearts.

They had little time to keep diaries of their great meetings and their many converts. They never carried a calculating machine, and they never published a magazine every time a miracle

was performed. They never tooted their own horn. They always humbly preached the sound doctrine from the Word of God. They sacrificed daily, denied themselves, took up their cross and were totally committed, with a passion, to spreading the glorious gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The greatest testimony and proof of their ministry is the many congregations founded in those early days. There was an unselfish spirit in these precious saints.

During the early ministry of our forefathers, there was always a distinct, and clear picture of what was of God and what was not. The early pioneers never had a problem discerning between the false, the superficiality, and the genuine. **THERE WAS NO MIDDLE GROUND.** One was either in or out. He was either serving Christ or serving the Devil. **THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GENUINE AND THE FALSE WAS NOT BLURRED, OBSCURED, OR INDISTINCT.** If one did not line up with the Word of God, he was corrected or ostracized from the church.

THE GREATEST COMPLIMENT WE CAN GIVE OUR FOREFATHERS, IS TO KEEP OUR HERITAGE PURE, ALWAYS LINING UP WITH THE WORD OF GOD.

The years have passed and we are now in the 21st century, yet no voice has been raised strong enough to stir the church and shake the world in order to bring God’s people back into focusing on Jesus Christ, *the author and finisher of our faith.* A wave of Christianity, militant proselytism and unintelligent “evangelism” threatens to be the only apparent forms of “conversion” confronting a reality-hungry generation. The church world is fast drifting into an “easy believe-ism” salvation Christ would not recognize. Lest He be grieved, He who bought the Church with His blood, men who profess salvation must meet anew God’s own conditions of true conversion.

“CHRISTIAN” is almost a meaningless word to the mass of people today because so many believe that they are Christians, when in fact, they are not. When you ask the people of America if they are Christian and do they believe in God, they will say “yes.” but they also believe in Buddhism, in Muhammadanism (Islamic religion) Shintoism, and all other “isms.” May the holy spirit of truth challenge our hearts as we celebrate our 95th anniversary and our 75th annual convention. May we appreciate the solemn injunction of our forefathers, as well as the apostle Paul - **“Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith... Prove your own selves** (2 Corinthians 13:5).

General Overseer’s Message is continued on p. 24

In Memoriam
Rev. James DeMola, Sr.
 1932 – 2001



REVEREND James DeMola was born on the 15th day of September 1932 to the late Reverend Joseph and Rose DeMola in Center Square, New Jersey. In 1933 his parents moved their small family to Staten Island, NY where the family has maintained a homestead for over 65 years. He is the eldest of three sons. His brother, Joseph Jr., has gone home to be with the Lord. His other brother, Rev. David T. DeMola, is founder and senior pastor of Faith Fellowship Ministries, Sayerville, NJ. His mother, Rose, is still active in the work of the Lord at Christian Pentecostal Church, Staten Island.

The former Antoinette Dadetta of Staten Island and James were joined together in marriage on October 5, 1951. They have been happily married for over 47 years. They were blessed with three children, Roseann (Hofker), James Jr., and Robert David. They were further blessed with two lovely grandchildren, Robert David Jr., and Christian Joseph.

Bro. DeMola attended Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute where he was a member of the R.O.T.C. He worked as a special police officer in the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel for over two years then went to work in the securities district of Wall Street for the next ten. He attended the Wall Street School of Finance while there. At the age of 49, he returned to college part-time to complete his degree. He received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and is listed in the marquis of Who's Who in America (49th Ed.)

At the age of 13, he received the Lord as his personal savior and received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost at age 15. It was at that time he received a definite call to the ministry. Bro. Jim was elected to the Christ Crusader's committee of the Eastern District of the CCNA in 1953 and served for eight years, and then served as Secretary/Treasurer for the National Christ Crusaders for six more years. He was elected to the CCNA Executive Board to the office of Director of the Youth Department for six years. He helped in the formation of Rochester School of the Bible, serving on its original board of directors. Upon the death of his father, Bro. DeMola was elected to serve as the District Overseer,

and, subsequently, Assistant General Overseer of the Eastern District. He had served on the District Presbytery as Secretary/Treasurer and Assistant General Overseer for over thirty-six years.

Bro. Jim served as pastor of Springs of Life Christian Center, Mullica Hill, NJ for thirty-six years. He founded and conducted the Springs of Life Radio Broadcast which aired for over 8 years, and the Word of Life television program which was aired for 2 years. He also founded the Manna Christian School which met at Springs of Life Christian Center.

Bro. James DeMola was ordained to the ministry in 1964 and has served the CCNA for 46 years. He went home to be with the Lord on September 4, 2001. His ministry to the Christian Church of North America has been greatly appreciated by the CCNA family. To God be all the glory!

The Christian Church of North America expresses deep gratitude to Rev. & Mrs. James DeMola, Sr., for their many years of commitment and contribution to the spiritual growth of our beloved movement.

Rev. John DelTurco,
 General Overseer



REV. JAMES "SONNY" DEMOLA

*The discerning eye sees the Hand
 in all that nature has to own.
 The open heart receives His Spirit
 and eternity to hold.
 The faithful man takes not his own path
 but is so led by the King,
 To a life of sacrifice for service
 and a harvest of souls is reaped.*

ERT

CCNA Education Department

Rev. Lucian Gandolfo

Executive Director



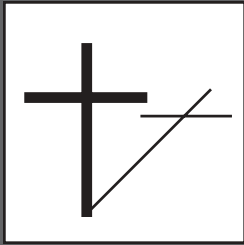
2001 CCNA SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

THE faithful brothers and sisters of the CCNA assisted the following students in their educational pursuits. Of 20 applications received, 3 were not considered due to being late or incomplete. Of the remaining 17, 11 awards were granted:

<u>Recipient</u>	<u>School / Major / Career / Ministry Goal</u>	<u>Scholarship / Amount</u>
1. Nathan Ascensio <i>Roseville, MI</i>	CCNA School of the Bible <i>Pastoral Ministry</i>	Valentino / \$250
2. Ashleigh Bolents <i>Niagara Falls, NY</i>	St. John Fisher College <i>History / Education</i>	Valentino / \$250
3. Philip Dauernheim <i>Bellmore, NY</i>	Christ for the Nations Institute <i>Missions / Pastoral Ministries</i>	Lipps / \$500 Roberts / \$500
4. Joseph Dingwall <i>Fairless Hills, PA</i>	Valley Forge Christian College <i>Pastoral Studies / Worship</i>	Saginario / \$500
5. Darrel Eldridge <i>Melvindale, MI</i>	Valley Forge Christian College <i>Education / Ministry</i>	Valentino / \$250
6. Steven Frank <i>Erie, PA</i>	Edinboro University <i>Communications / Youth Ministry</i>	Valentino / \$250
7. Eliezer Perez <i>Bellmore, NY</i>	Zion Bible Institute <i>Gospel Ministry</i>	Lipps / \$500
8. Joshua Selley <i>New Brighton, PA</i>	Rhema Bible Training Center <i>Ministry / Evangelism</i>	Valentino / \$138 Saginario / \$75 Palma / \$37
9. Joni Tello <i>Astoria, NY</i>	Elim Bible Institute <i>Missions</i>	Roberts / \$500
10. Otniel Manyika <i>Fairless Hill, PA</i>	Elim Bible Institute <i>Ministry</i>	Saginario / \$200 (Awarded Nov '00)
11. Michael Laura <i>Hicksville, NY</i>	Zion Bible Institute <i>Pastoral & Evangelistic Studies</i>	Palma / \$500

Would you like to be a part of this blessing? Please consider a generous contribution. Do you know a student worthy of a CCNA scholarship? Visit our web site(www.ccna.org) for more information.

**CCNA Education Department
Scholarship Fund
1294 Rutledge Road
Transfer, PA 16154**



In Remembrance: Sister Vivian Prestigiacommo

OUR Sister Vivian Prestigiacommo has gone home to be with the Lord. Philippians 1:21 says, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Our sister Vivian has had some difficult times in the past few years. Her physical difficulties brought joy, sorrow, victories, defeats and surprises. That is life. The test is how we handle the materials, the stuff that life puts into our hands.

We cannot always choose what happens to us, but we can choose how we respond to it. We cannot always control the climate outside, but we can certainly control the thermostat inside. And this is the best of life—to take the raw materials that have been dealt us and make out of them something of worth and beauty. This is the real task of living. THIS IS WHAT OUR SISTER VIVIAN HAS DONE.

Our Sister Vivian could have cursed and resisted her physical difficulties, but instead she took them submissively. She could have taken her physical difficulties as a turtle takes the prodding of a stick: crawls into a shell and takes whatever comes, accepts things because they are inevitable, resigning to them because there’s nothing else we can do. Historically, this is the way of *stoicism*.

Instead, our Sister Vivian used her physical difficulties as stepping stones in Christian growth. She had a choice: resist your problems, accept your problems passively, or use them as a means of Christian growth.

Paul said, “The things that have happened to me have turned out to the advantage of the gospel.” Our Sister Vivian learned the secret from Christ of how to take advantage of a disadvantage—how to find fortune in misfortune. In spite of Vivian’s physical difficulties, she went on to become victorious—more than a conqueror over the enemy who tried to subdue her. Those who die in the Lord are winners. Those who remain are losers.

How tragic that God’s people still look upon the departed as losers—poor, miserable souls, cheated out of a greater measure of life. Oh, but if our spiritual eyes and ears could be opened but for a few moments, we would see our dear sister, on God’s side of the universe, walking in the pure, crystal river of eternal life, shouting:

“I WON! I WON! I’M FREE AT LAST! PRESS ON, DEAR EARTHLINGS, THERE’S NOTHING TO FEAR. DEATH DOES NOT STING. IT IS TRUE: IT IS BETTER TO DEPART AND TO BE WITH THE LORD.”

Death is but a mere breaking of the fragile shell. At the precise moment our Lord decides our shell has served its purpose, a sudden rush of eternal life floods the soul, and God opens the shell—only to free the new creature that has come of age.

Certainly it is natural to mourn and weep for those who die. Even the death of the righteous is painful for those left behind. But, as followers of the Christ who holds the keys of death in His

hand, we dare not think of death as an accident perpetrated by the devil. Satan cannot destroy a single child of God. Satan, though permitted to touch Job’s flesh and afflict the body, could not take his life. God’s children always die right on His schedule, not one second too soon or too late. If the steps of a righteous person are ordered by the Lord, He orders the final one too.

In spite of our sister Vivian’s illness, she kept right on keeping on, always declaring her testimony, always ministering the word of God, as well as singing for the glory of God. Her illness did not deter her one bit from bringing honor and glory to God.

She was a soldier, in the midst of a battle, all the way, until God said “enough is enough.” When the final moment came, the angels ushered our sister Vivian into the presence of God. She is a winner! She won the race! To God be all the glory!

We are praying for our brother Prestigiacommo and his family that God will fill that vacuum in their hearts with the presence of God. We express our deepest sympathy to them, and yet rejoice with them, that their dearest loved one has finished the race and is now in the presence of God—a winner!



Rev. John DelTurco



A Perspective on Evangelism

by Rev James Cassidy

Faith Bible Church, Mohegan Lake, NY

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promises as some understand slowness. He is patient with you not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

I Bring You the Childhood Story of Dudley Do Right

Dudley Do Right was a law enforcement officer. He went about doing good deeds and helping the innocent, while bringing the criminals to justice. The story relates that one day, while completing his rounds in his territory, a faint cry was heard, "HELP!!!" The cry continued until he came upon a fair maiden who was bound hand and foot. She was placed on railroad tracks where a sinister villain had planned her demise. The train scheduled to pass that way was rapidly approaching. The train grew closer and her cries continued for help. The suspense grew until, at the last moment, Dudley rescued her.

This story brings about a great many truths. First, we, like Dudley, have been given the job of rescuing the lost. This appointment comes from no less than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who loves them so deeply. Second, the lost are real people who have been taken captive by the enemy and are in bondage to sin:

and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:26).

Third, like the train that ran on schedule, there are events which will take place in the lives of each of these people. The events, which are kept by God, are their personal hour of death, the soon approaching judgment of God upon this world, and the rapture of the church from the earth. Lastly, Dudley was so consumed by his calling and the cries of the helpless that he risked his life to save others. He had love in his heart for humanity and it showed. The paperwork and daily rituals of being a mouny did not hinder him from hearing a young maiden's cry and being moved to action.

God's love is always demonstrated through action (John 3:16-17). Jesus Christ gave His entire life and paid the ultimate price to rescue us from sin (1 Pet 1:18-20).

Jesus Christ gave His life on a cruel, bloody and torturous cross. He cried, "**My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?**" (Matt 27:46) in order that we would never have to cry that cry. As the old song says, "*When He was on the cross I was on His mind.*"

What is on our mind today? Is it our desire to rescue those who are perishing? It would have been a great crime for Dudley to ignore the cry of the maiden so that he could pursue another course of action. But Dudley lived true to his name - Do Right. He was a man who was given to do that which was right - not always what was easy, but what was right. He undoubtedly risked life and limb to save others. Are we willing to do the same - to do that which is right in the sight of the Lord? Are we willing to exhaust all time, effort, money, and resources to see God's will done in the earth? Can we hear the voice of our Savior saying,

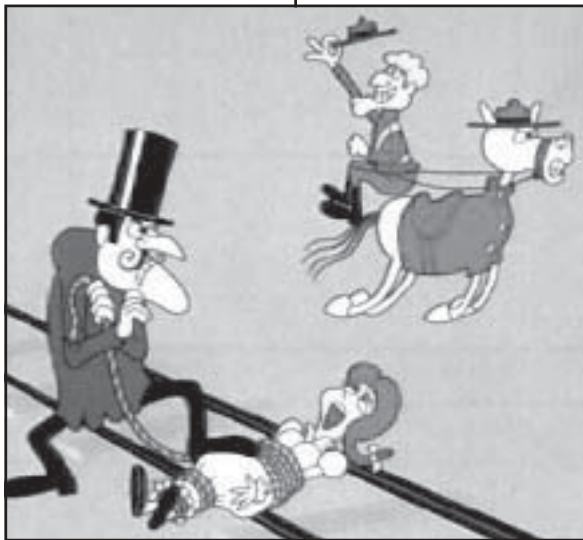
"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but He that believeth not shall be damned." I, like Dudley, want to do right. In the last day I want to hear my Lord say to me, "Jim, you did right in My sight."

It is my vision to assist the church in reaping a great harvest. We must follow the One who gave us the greatest example of evangelism, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Matthew 9 and 10 declare the way to "do right" in the area of evangelism. Matthew 9:35 declares that Jesus went about all the cities and villages. Jesus saw the multitudes and was moved to compassion. Jesus prayed to the Father for

laborers to be sent into the harvest field, then gave His own disciples power to be those laborers (Matt 10).

Before Jesus sent the disciples out He gave them instructions on where to go, what to say, what to do, what they should bring, what to expect, and what the cost would be. In concluding His lesson, the Master did what He told them to do - He went out into their cities to preach and teach.

In Matthew 10:5-7 the word *go* is used three times. There is a game that I play with my son who is learning to walk and run. I call out to my son, GO, GO, GO and he in turn laughs and runs around the room with me in circles. At times he runs under my legs and we both have a great time. It is thrilling to hear my son echo what I have taught him to do and say GO, GO, GO, as he



Evangelism is continued on p. 24



World Missions

Rev. John DelTurco
Missions Director

FAITH PROMISE OFFERING

Psalm 133:1 says, *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”*

At our Annual Convention’s Climatic Service, Sunday evening, September 2, 2001, Bro. Rick George carried the above theme as he preached on unity. **As a result, our Faith Promise Offering for missions totaled over \$115,000.** To God be the Glory! I greatly appreciate the cooperation and the love of our CCNA family, always ready to meet the need and challenge when it is presented. This past convention has been one of our greatest. Thank you CCNA Family!

If per chance you were not able to attend the Convention, you still have time to send in your Faith Promise offering for the Department of Missions. We have a worldwide family that has many needs in foreign countries. I thank God for His rich blessings upon our Convention, as well as upon our CCNA family. Let us continue this momentum of unity, believing God for a new Holy Ghost outpouring of His Pentecostal power.

Thank you, again, for your love and support for the General Council of CCNA. Let us go forward in unity, preparing the Church for the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Rev. John DelTurco
Missions Director (pro tem)



NEWS FROM COLOMBIA

The Pedraza Family

In a very special way to a very special people, we bring greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are almost through 2001. The hour is getting closer to the return of our Lord and King and the harvest is yet to be gathered in. Our prayers are that altogether we work toward that great day of His appearing.

It is not unknown to us that the world is in great turmoil. It is on the brink of giving birth. It is in great travail. More than ever we as His bride must lift up our eyes to behold the forthcoming Victor. Even in our weaknesses, God is faithful. Colombia: In spite of the news media and all negative propaganda, God loves this country. Colombia is experiencing every type of “sickness” that there is and that may come. Socially, politically and, sad to say, spiritually. Having been in Colombia for 31 years, I have never seen the country in such an “earthquake.” Socially—poverty, hunger and famine. Politically—no answers. Spiritually—every wind of doctrine. Like a supermarket, go in and pick your choice: “Love the gospel as you please, we are all on the same boat bound for heaven.” The scriptures are being fulfilled right before our eyes. We must really claim our salvation and remember only those who persevere shall be saved!

Due to this situation, the church of Christ is being tried by fire. Several churches have had to close their doors due to the financial famine and have not been able to meet their obligations. In other places the pastors have been forced to leave their congregations and move out due to threats on their lives. We are living on the Atlantic coast of Colombia, but we do not escape. The situation is all over the country. But we do praise and glorify the Lord for His protection on our lives and on our churches. We are serving a God who does not compromise nor negotiate. There is only one Gospel, unadulterated, pure, genuine and also very powerful. God gives strength and authority to continue to preach and teach it. Many churches who have let down their standards may flourish for a time, but their foundations are being built on TNT! Any little spark will set off the fuse. We covet your prayers that God continues to work and that we honor Him and give Him the glory.

Even though there is much against the country, GOD IS STILL ON THE MOVE. We have been experiencing a mighty move of the Holy Spirit and in each service fold are being filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. It reminds me of the old fashioned camp meetings in Aroostook County in Maine. Many are turning to the Lord at this time and again the Gospel proves to be the power of God. Even though we may go forth weeping while sowing the seed, we will reap the harvest rejoicing. We want to express our most sincere appreciation for your constant and faithful support, both financially and spiritually.

World Missions is continued on p. 23



Your Health Advisory

Stem Cell Research: What's the Real Deal?

by Marcia P. Kaufman, RN



I

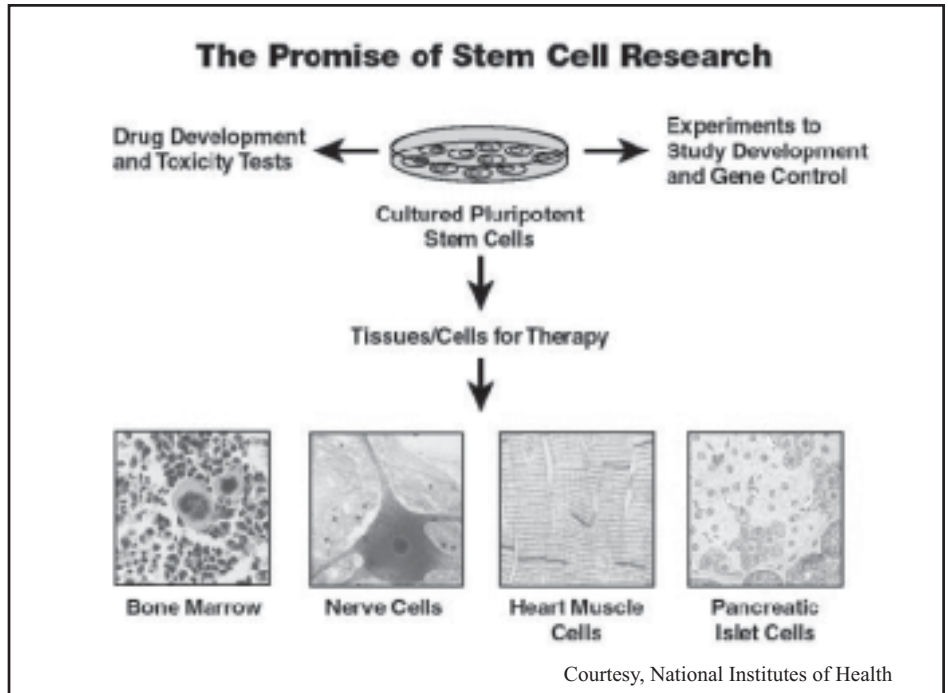
n the world that existed before September 11, 2001, one of the most fiercely debated topics was **stem cell research**. We would

like to present the facts and let you make up your own mind about what this research is all about and the controversy surrounding it.

Stem cells are immature cells that are present in the developing human from conception. These cells are *plur-i-po-tent* which means they have the potential to develop into any of over 200 cell-types in the body. As an embryo grows, these cells *differentiate* and become the tissues and organs that make up the human being. The stem cell's 30,000+ genes determine which kind of mature cell it will become.

Stem cells are found not only in the body of a fetus, but also in the placenta and umbilical cord. After the birth of a child, stem cells are produced and stored in various parts of the body such as the brain, bone marrow, and were recently discovered in the skin. They are then still useful by differentiating into whatever cell needs replacement after damage or normal cell death.

In theory, these special cells could hold the key to treating and possibly curing many dreaded diseases. According to a National Institutes of Health (NIH) report from July 2001, stem cells "may have the potential to generate replacement cells for a broad array of tissues and organs, such as the heart, the pancreas, and nervous system." This could mean treatment for diseases that are incurable today such as chronic heart disease. In fact, these cells bring hope for a cure for some devastating neuro-degenerative conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease,) and spinal cord injury by regenerating nerve cells to repair the damage. For Parkinson's disease, the stem cells could grow new dopamine-secreting nerve cells for a complete cessation of tremors or other symptoms.



The problem in autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid and osteoarthritis, multiple sclerosis, lupus, and type I diabetes is that the body's immune system mistakes its own cells for invaders and attacks them destroying normal function. With arthritis, the joints are attacked; with lupus the attack is on the skin, joints, brain, and kidneys. Multiple sclerosis is caused by the destruction of the protective sheaths of protein on nerve fibers, and loss of the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas produces type I diabetes. Destroying the patient's immune system with total-body radiation, then transfusing stem cells programmed to become a new immune system, could, in theory, alleviate any of the above conditions.

As promising as this all sounds, they are still just possibilities at this time. There has been some progress made in "turning on" the right gene to make the cell type required, i.e., heart muscle cells have been grown from stem cells, but these have been animal studies and human trials are still far off. UCLA Medical center, however, reports of two brothers who were transfused with the stem cells from the cord of a newborn baby. They had a terminal genetic disease

of the immune system, so the parents consented to this drastic therapy and it worked! That was the only success story using stem cells that has been currently reported in the medical literature.

The value of this research needs to be offset against the cost. Researchers apparently are not concerned about the **source** of the stem cells. Whether they come from embryos that have been discarded as "spares" from fertility clinics, or from fetuses after they have been killed by abortion seems to make no difference in some scientific circles. The fact that they are destroying the life of one person to possibly relieve or cure another needs to be considered on moral grounds.

Thankfully, there are **other sources** of stem cells that do not have the same awful cost. As mentioned before, all adults have a supply of stem cells throughout life that can be used for themselves (or others.) Some scientists are working on harvesting a person's own stem cells which can be pre-programmed and placed back in the body

Health Advisory continued on p. 22

It's In The Bible!

A Study in the Word with Rev Eric R Towse

Topic: Israel 101

First of a Multi-part Series of the Biblical Record of Ancient Israel



INTRODUCTION

No one has ever grasped the true reality of the Gospel of Jesus Christ without understanding that it represents God's fulfillment of a promise made to Abraham centuries before Jesus became a man. We must go back to the Old Testament—to the old covenant between God and Israel. As we do, our physical and spiritual eyes become opened when, as radio commentator Paul Harvey would say, "*you know the rest of the story.*"

Jesus was a Jew. His real (Hebrew) name is Yeshua. Mary, his mother was a Jewess. Her real name was Miriam (the same as Moses' sister.) Jesus human father was also a Jew. His name was Yuseff. Jesus was presented at the temple, circumcised according to the law of Moses, lived in perfect obedience to the law and to the leading of the Spirit. He died on a cross a Jew. He was raised from the dead "King of Kings" and "Lord of Lords." Yet, would anyone dare say, "Jesus is *too* Jewish?"

When a Gentile (non-Jew) becomes a Christian, does he also become a Jew? Is the saved Gentile considered an Israelite? a Hebrew? To the reader who has never given this much thought, let me suggest that the following study will be of immense help in putting the pieces of this puzzle together.

In the interests of space, Scripture verses placed in [brackets] should be read before continuing. Have your Bible alongside and hold on for an exciting trip through the spiritual roots of Christianity: *Ancient Israel.*

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

[GENESIS 11:24-32 and 12:1-20]

Abram, son of Terah, lived in Ur of the Chaldeans. Terah left Ur together with his family for the land of Canaan. Terah settled in Haran, the land of his brother, and died there. (Had God first called Terah?) From Haran, God called Abram to continue on to the land of Canaan. God had promised Abram many things. Among them:

- to make him into a great nation,
- to bless him, and that he would be a blessing to others
- to make his name great,
- to bless those that bless him, and curse those that curse him.
- to bless all peoples on earth through him.



It is this last promise that saw fulfillment in the birth of the Son of God.

Although God had told Abram to leave his people and his father's house, he took his nephew Lot with him. This disobedience would have serious consequences, first to Abram, and then to his seed after him.

When Abram arrived in Canaan, God appeared to Abram and made one more promise: That God would give Abram's seed that land. Abram set up an altar at Bethel and "called upon the name of the Lord."

[GENESIS 13]

After a time in Egypt due to a famine, Abram returned to Canaan where he and Lot separated. After Lot had gone, the Lord again appeared to Abram and promised more:

- that the land upon which he stood would, indeed, be given to him and his offspring **forever**,
 - his offspring would be as numerous as the dust of the earth.
- Abram then settled in Hebron (hence he was called a *Hebrew*.)

[GENESIS 15]

After Abram's successful rescue of Lot from the battle of the kings, and his subsequent blessing by Melchizedek, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:

- Abram was not to fear,
- God would be his shield,
- his reward would be very great.

Abram then asked the Lord for children as he was old. The Lord promised him an heir "coming from his own body" and reaffirmed His promise that Abram's seed would be innumerable using the example of "count the stars."

Abram then entered into a relationship with the Lord from which there would be no turning back: He *believed* God. In hindsight, we may tend to minimize this, but it was such a big step for someone who was following the Lord entirely by faith, that God credited Abram with *righteousness*—a right-standing before Him. (So great is righteousness before God that it would take the shed blood of Jesus on Calvary's cross to bring about righteousness after this, because to the people of Israel, righteousness could only be obtained by complete obedience to the law:

And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness." Deut 6:25.

This was a signal event in the life of Abram and the plan of God.)

God then "cuts" a covenant with Abram using a heifer, goat, ram, dove, and a pigeon. In a deep sleep, Abram hears that after a period of 400 years, his ancestors would be enslaved and then freed to take possession of the land in the fourth generation. (v.10) Then, God confirmed his words by fire upon the sacrificed animals.

It's In The Bible is continued on p.19

Christian Church of North Am



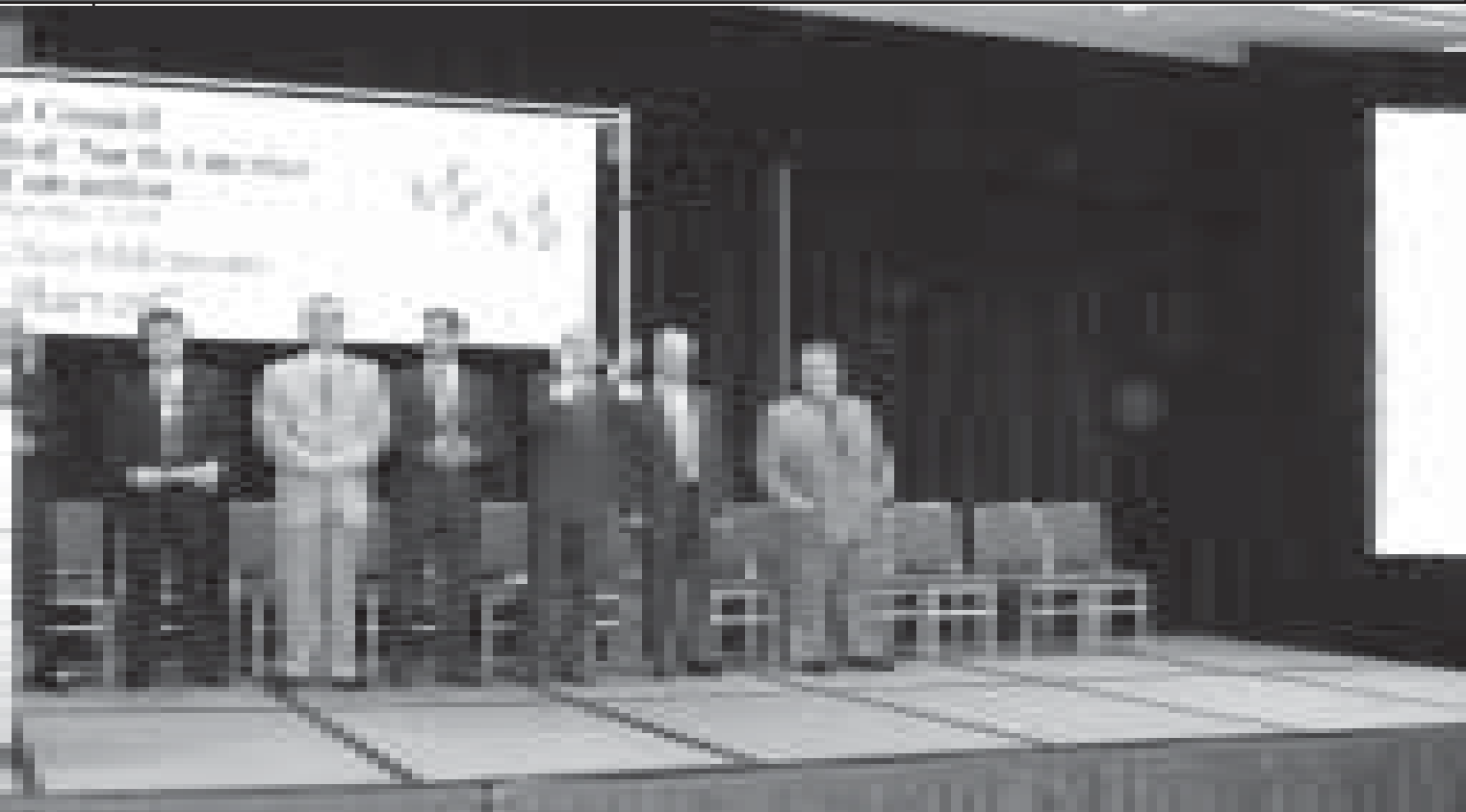
TAPES ARE AVAILABLE



REV. REGGIE ABRAHAM



America — CONVENTION 2001



FOR ALL SERVICES



BISHOP GARLINGTON



District News

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT

The **Christian Church of North America of Washington, PA**, celebrated its 75th anniversary on September 8, 2001. Rev. John DelTurco attended the celebration and presented the church's pastor, Rob Berk with a certificate from CCNA. (This church bears the same name as our movement.) At the celebration, the saints were honored with these words:

We would like to acknowledge all of our brothers and sisters in Christ who are now in the presence of the Lord. We honor them for sowing seeds of love, dedication, and service; as we continue to reap the fruits of their labor. We also appreciate the labor and dedication of those in our present congregation who are sowing new seeds that are vital to the kingdom. A kingdom that includes not only this congregation, but the entire body of Christ throughout our communities.



Mrs. Berk, Rev. Roy Berk, Rev. John DelTurco

Christian Assembly, Shady Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA held a baptism on August 5, 2001. Pastor James Aiken conducted a joyous service where eleven souls were baptized. After the service a luncheon followed. God is still working. Praise the Lord!

—Mrs. Victoria Muto



CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY- SHADY AVE - PITTSBURGH, PA

HOME MISSIONS OUTREACH

On July 1, 2001, the Home Missions Department of CCNA came alongside with **Christian Assembly of Burgettstown, PA** to declare and launch a weekend outreach plan for September 14-16. Our objective was simple: "This City is Ours." We declared and presented this vision based solely upon Psalm 2:8,

"ask of me and I'll give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

A ministry team from Greenville, PA, New Brighton, PA, Melvindale, MI, and Akron, OH assembled:



Next, we began to work the plan. First we asked the saints of Christian Assembly not only to begin praying, but also to fast for seven days along with walking through their city, anointing every street post and claiming every street and every home for the Kingdom of God.

We followed up on this by writing every church in the district to personally join with us in prayer and to set aside three days of

District News is continued on p. 23

Bits 'n Pieces

KEEPING THE BOAT AFLOAT

by Paula K. Jeffries



My husband and I live in Maine, which is a wild and beautiful place. Although you may think it impossible, the rugged and rocky coast weaves in and out of countless coves and inlets, adding up to over 2000 miles of coastline. There are many beautiful sandy beaches for the enjoyment of swimming and walking, but much of the coast lies in rock-faced wil-

derness. The waters off these shores can be treacherous even in the mildest of weather, yet the beauty and wonder of the sea continues now as it has for centuries to call man into its vastness. Perhaps it is because there man can feel God in His fullness. Life is comparable to the sea; ever changing, stormy one moment, calm and peaceful the next.



When a man and woman meet and realize that they want to be together for a lifetime, they set out together on this journey into the sea of life in a boat we call marriage. Once the vows are exchanged the couple sets sail usually with great hopeful-

ness and wonder. At this point, they don't know much about the sea of life, or their sailing partner. As the months and years pass in this journey they become more accustomed to both. This subject, marriage, is as vast as the sea itself, and there are many aspects and nuances related to marriage, that obviously can't be addressed in a short article. However, there are a few little guidelines, or pointers, that can help to keep the boat afloat, whether the seas be calm or stormy.

First of all, if a crew is to work together, they need some ground rules. Every ship needs a Captain. Husbands, that's you. Whether you want the responsibility or not, God has placed it upon your shoulders. Secondly, every Captain has a First-Mate. Wives, that is where we come in. Sometimes we don't like the idea that we aren't the Captain, but the First-Mate (help meet) is a God ordained position, and one we should fill with gladness of heart. Once this order is established, the crew has to learn to pull together. Pulling together, binds people together.

So many times we've seen couples work for years to achieve certain things in life, only to have their marriage fall apart when they reach their goal. At this point you'll hear comments like, "We were so happy when we didn't have two nickels to rub together." The reason is simple, when they were struggling, they struggled together toward a common goal. When Jesus Christ is the center of a marriage, He keeps common goals in the couple's midst.

Another guideline to help keep the boat afloat is to lighten the load. A ship that is taking on too much water will eventually sink. It is during a time like this that seasoned sailors will cast overboard those things which are excess baggage. When a couple marry, they are two separate individuals coming on board with the baggage of each of their families:

"Mom cooked her pasta this way."

"Daddy always took the car to the shop."

"Aunt Minnie—"

Well, you get the picture. As time passes the two individuals become closer, and they do this by tossing overboard anything that is not pertinent to their oneness. At times making the decisions of what should go can be very difficult. Again, if Jesus is at the center of the marriage, He can be called upon for wisdom and guidance in making the choices that are best for the couple.

Finally, for a boat to stay afloat, it must be equipped with all the necessary safety features. A compass is vital to safety, for we need to know where we are going, and what headings to take to assure our arrival. God's Word, the Bible is the compass of our lives. As one credit-card axiom states, "never leave home without it". We should not endeavor upon any venture without God's Word, His guiding and leading. Read together as a couple. Study God's word and take time to discuss the things you read.

Another vital feature on a boat setting out to sea is the radio. Communication is necessary for safety and survival. You need to carry a two-way radio. The first is for you as a couple to communicate with God. That's prayer. Through prayer troubles vanish, wounds and rifts are mended and hearts can be bound together and to God. The second part of your two-way radio, is to communicate with each other. Keep your goals, dreams and visions in the forefront of your conversations. Make sure your lines of communication stay open. This is one key to a healthy marriage.

The third safety necessity is the life-vest. The best equipped vessel can be rocked during a storm of adversity. Your life-vest is your faith in God. The Bible calls it the shield of faith. If you have this, you can withstand the vilest of storms.

Marriage was ordained by God. He built the boat folks. You can trust him with your journey. All you have to do, is seek His

Bits 'n Pieces Continued on Next Page

help and follow His instructions, and you will be successful in this venture. Yes, there will be storms, but with Jesus in the center of your life, the biggest part of your journey will be a honeymoon cruise.

HOPE DURING A TRAGEDY by Rachel Malikow

ON Tuesday, September 11, 2001, one of the world's busiest cities stood silent and still. The crashing down of the towers of the World Trade Center was like a shot heard around the world. During that day, probably many classrooms in America turned from their planned lessons to listen in disbelief to the announcement that two planes had crashed into the World Trade Center, and that both towers had collapsed. Not only that, but a third plane had flown into the Pentagon.

I went home that afternoon and switched on the television set. Every channel was broadcasting new reports on the attack. Many were claiming it was the work of Middle Eastern terrorists. In the last few days, that possibility has become more and more certain.

Many people described that Tuesday as "surreal." I watched my own classmates as they moved from shock to fear to confusion. The things that I had been concerned about began to feel trivial and unimportant in the light of such terrifying news. Hearing that our country was under attack was like having a blanket ripped off of me on a cold day. The safety and liberty that I have enjoyed all my life was suddenly threatened. In days of prosperity, it's easy to imagine our country to be invincible. But that day, I was given a cruel reminder to the fragility of man, how small we are, and how little we really know about our own futures. For a country that has always had something to say, we stood speechless. There was little I could do for my fellow citizens in New York City, but on Tuesday and Wednesday nights, I went to prayer meetings for the families of those who had died in the attack, and for the United States Government as they plan a response to these acts of terrorism.

I am a Christian, and I believe that God has not only heard my prayers, but will answer them in His time. I have been reminded of man's frailty, but I am also confident in God's supremacy even over this tragedy. People have pulled together in the last few days, rescue workers have labored around the clock searching for survivors, and medical supply companies have sent help without being asked. Americans around the country have given both donations of blood and money to help those injured in the attack. But despite all these acts of kindness, it is my confidence in God that gives me hope for the future, both the future of my life and my country.

Rachel is the 17 year-old granddaughter of Rev. Eugene Palma, Rochester, New York, and submitted this article to her school Journalism class.—Ed.

THE BUTTON by Mrs. Beverley Stake, Greenville Christian Assembly

IN the summer of 2001 I ordered 10 "In God We Trust" posters from the American Family Association, Tupelo, Mississippi, hoping that God would give me an opportunity to present them to our three local high schools. Every morning before school started, a small group met for prayer at each school. When I asked if there was a Bible club, I was informed that one was to start the first week of school. Chantel, my granddaughter, planned to attend. This gave me an open door to bring the posters. When I showed them to Chantel, she immediately said, "those would make neat buttons." I then went to our local print shop and ordered ten buttons to be made. I was told they would be ready in a week. This order was placed September 6th, the Thursday before our nation's tragedy of September 11th. After some thought, Chantel and I decided to order fifty more buttons to give to the members of her Bible Club at Greenville High School as well as the youth group at our home church, Greenville Christian Assembly. When I picked up the buttons, I wanted Chantel to see them right after school, so I took them to her mother, Sherry, who works at the Greenville police station. Sergeant Pete Calenda was on duty that day and asked about the button. Sherry explained that her daughter Chantel was inspired by the poster. Sergeant Calenda was so impressed, that he called the local newspaper. Sherry the called me right away and said that the Record-Argus Newspaper is on their way to the high school to interview Chantel. I told her that Chantel hadn't even seen what the buttons had looked like. So Sherry quickly responded, "Well, Mom, you better get one of those buttons up to the school."

I was able to get my younger son, Todd to run the button up to the high school. During her 8th period class, Chantel was called to the office. When she got there and opened the envelope she saw the button and thought "oh Grandma!" and then went back to class. Five minutes later Chantel was called back to the office. When Chantel again returned to the school office, the secretary introduced her to a gentleman. "Chantel," the secretary said, "do you know who Mr. Rich Guesman is? He is a reporter from the Record-Argus, and he would like to interview you. Is that all right?"

Chantel agreed. When she got home from school, she called me and said, "Grandma don't ever do that again!" The next morning's front page displayed a picture of Chantel (Hoganmiller) McClimans and the interview in the town newspaper.

From that time we have been trying to keep up with the demand for buttons. We are giving them to people asking only for a \$2.00 donation. Some people have given much more. The proceeds go to the American Red Cross for relief efforts in New York City and Washington, D.C.

September 14th - 16th, our youth participated in a Home Missions outreach in Burgettstown, PA. We were joined by other youth from Michigan and Ohio. Chantel gave each member buttons as they did their mission for the weekend. On September 19th, during the "see you at the pole" school prayer, Chantel presented a framed "In God We Trust" poster to the school superintendent, Sandra Homer, through the Bible club.



I want to thank the **American Family Association** for giving us permission to make the buttons. At our Community Candlelight Service for the Nation held at Thiel College Passavant Center, our Mayor, Clifford Harringer asked us to set up a table to make buttons available. Everywhere I look someone is wearing a button. The police department gave my

daughter permission to sell them at the station. All the police officers are wearing them. Sgt. Calenda wore a button to the Mercer County Court House, 20 miles away while appearing at a court case. Within 45 minutes, an employee of the court house phoned the Greenville Police station and requested 50 more buttons to be delivered. A meter-maid, took a bag of buttons on her rounds. People, businesses, the Medical Center were asking for more buttons. We soon advertised in the paper for people to pick up the "In God We Trust" buttons at the Police station and a local mini-mart. Chantel and her younger sister, Rachael, age 10, her cousin, Alyssis, age 11, and other friends from Christian Assembly, Joe Calvin and Wesley Frantz made them available in front of Wal-Mart. Other youth members Nicky, Brandon and Josh went door to door making buttons available for donation to help the American Red Cross. Thanks to CCI Printing, these young people and people like Joyce Andrusky who made buttons with a hand button maker produced and distributed over 2000 buttons to-date.

Time is what we gave. God gave the inspiration to Chantel. Some people said that it's too bad it took a tragedy for people to trust in God. I informed them that God had already given us the inspiration before the tragedy. When we trust in God before tragedy, we trust in God during tragedy and will be trusting in God after the tragedy. My 12 year-old granddaughter, Chantel has no idea of all that has taken place. For her, trusting in God is as natural as breathing. Jesus said,

"Let the little children come to me"

Never send them away! For the Kingdom of God belongs to men who have hearts as trusting as these little children. (Luke 18:16 T.L.B.)

MISSIONS VIDEO

The missions video shown at convention is available from CCNA Headquarters at a cost of \$20

MOTHER-TO-MOTHER

by Marie Elena Wilson



DO you remember the joy you felt the day you felt life in your womb? To think you could be so blessed. I remember too! This was truly my special gift from God. He would be mine forever, I foolishly thought.

And do you remember the first time you looked into his beautiful brown eyes as you lay in your tent?

I remember too, his big blue eyes wrapped in a blue blanket; my precious boy.

And when your boy was two, remember how he used to wrap his arms around you, how you tenderly spoke to him? I remember too!

I was his whole world and he was mine. Life was so good then!

And then time passes and they put a rifle in your son's hand and ripped him out of your arms.

While my boy was carrying books to school, yours was carrying a gun.

While we were teaching our boy to love one another, they were teaching yours to hate.

And then, on that heartbreaking day, your son, filled with hate, drove a plane into that building, and for an instant, our sons met: hate met love, and heartbreak replaced joy.

Now our sons, our babies are gone. We share something now forever, you and I, a hole in our hearts that can never be filled.

The baby of the desert and the baby of the city are just pictures for us to hold.

Someday, when mothers' whispered peaceful words are so deeply rooted into the souls of our boys, then no evil will be able to sway them to hate—for Love is stronger than hate if we teach them well.

Now oceans apart we will lay down each night, remembering. Because all we are left with are the memories.





Science and the Bible

More Evidence of a Creator from Nature

by "Uncle Vince" Immordino

Although originally considered a Children's Story—one of the regular VISTA features, we felt that this evidence was so compelling that it should be directed to the attention of everyone.—Ed.

QUEEN YELLOW JACKETS



The queen yellow jacket awakes. There is a chill in the air that she has never experienced before. The sun seems to rise later each morning and set earlier in the day. Daylight hours seem shorter and the night seems longer. The female sterile workers find less and less caterpillars and maggots to feed

the newborn and daylight hours to hunt grow less and less. Somehow she knows it's the time. She has never in her short life experienced this before but she knows it's the time. All of her productive life, the queen has only laid eggs for sterile female worker yellow jackets but she knows it's time to change. She lays male drone eggs and a few female queen yellow jacket eggs. A few days later, they hatch. After a few days, the young queen yellow jackets fly upward followed by the male drones seeking to fulfill their one purpose of life.

Upwards they fly, followed now by only the very strong drones. Then the mating ritual takes place. The surviving drones' semen will father the next generation of yellow jackets. The drone falls away and dies. The fertilized queen yellow jackets now look for a pile of rotting leaves underneath a large tree. Never having experienced this before, she finds the absolutely perfect place to preserve her life and the lives of all future generations of yellow jackets.

She digs deep into the rotting leaves. As the days grow shorter and nights longer, the now "old" mother queen yellow jacket and all the workers in the nest are growing cold and hungry and will soon die. Safe and sound, warmed by the heat generated by the rotting leaves, sleeps the fertilized young queen yellow jacket. The winds of autumn cause the leaves from the tree to fall on the pile of rotting leaves. Layer after layer of insulating leaves help retain the heat generated by the rotting leaves. A light snowfall provides additional insulation against the cold. Layer after layer of insulating snow keeps our young queen yellow jacket safe and sound and relatively warm through the cold winter months. Winds, snow rain, sleet, storms, above. The temperature outside may fall to 40 below, yet safe and sound at never less than a safe 15 degrees, our queen sleeps, resting for the strenuous work which awaits her when she awakens.

The long winter is past. The sun begins to rise earlier and set later in the day. The days are longer and warmer. It's time for the queens to awaken from their rest. The days ahead will be full of work and struggle to survive. First, she must find a home.

She finds a rodent's abandoned hold in the ground and now builds a nest regarded by experts as the architectural equivalent of the finest building built by the finest architect.

A question from grade one: an architect spends twenty years of work and study to become an architect. With no instruction the queen yellow jacket builds an absolutely perfect masterpiece. How is this possible?

Once built, she lays female worker eggs and waits for them to hatch. When they hatch she must now find caterpillars and maggots to feed them and to care for their needs. When the second brood hatches, the first brood can care for the new ones, but they cannot yet hunt. The queen yellow jacket must continue to lay eggs and hunt. It is only when the first brood is able to hunt, which is about twenty days after they hatch, that the queen yellow jacket can concentrate on her main job of laying female worker eggs.

All through the summer the queen yellow jacket lays female eggs. The newly hatched yellow jacket worker females care for the eggs. When the newborn yellow jackets are about twenty days old, the workers assume the dangerous task of hunting for caterpillars and maggots. A perfectly ordered society.

One early crisp morning, the sun rises later and sets earlier. Caterpillars and maggots are hard to find with a shorter day. Even though the queen yellow jacket has never experienced it before, she knows the time has arrived. The time to lay drone male eggs and several queen yellow jacket eggs. She will reproduce after her kind. Without knowing why, she knows it is time for her to die and time to produce life for a new generation of yellow jackets.

Questions:

1. How did the queen know to dig into a pile of rotting leaves?
2. How did she have the ability to find a hole in the ground and build an architectural wonder?
3. How did she know to only lay female worker eggs?
4. How did she know her newborn would need caterpillars and maggots? She had never hunted before.
5. How did the workers know how to build an architectural wonder without going to school? They only live 30 days?
6. How did the queen know it was time to lay drone (male) and several queen yellow jacket eggs?
7. Is it possible that such an incredible plan could simply evolve through accident or chance or evolution?
8. Isn't it true that a plan demands a planner?

That's why we believe that,

"In the Beginning God Created. . ."

Uncle Vince

God then specifies the breadth of the land: From the Nile to the Euphrates belonging to the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites. It would take a period of 400 years for God to build a people through Abram to possess the land. Also, the sins of the Amorites had not yet reached "full measure." How merciful is God.

[GENESIS 16]

In this chapter is recorded the birth of Ishmael, Abram's first born son whom he conceived not with Sarai his wife, but with Hagar, Sarai's Egyptian servant. First, it must be recognized that in the culture of Abram's day, having children through servants was acceptable. Second, God had not specified Sarai as the mother (yet). Although some look upon this event as immoral, one must recognize that the Law of Moses was some 400 years away and that "obedience" was to God's direct revelation to Abram. Nevertheless, this created much tension in the relationship between Abram and Sarai—so much so that he permitted Sarai to send Hagar away! It was at an encounter in the desert where an angel of the Lord met Hagar and promised that her descendents also, would be too numerous to count. But concerning her son,

- she was to name him Ishmael (man is heard by God),
- he will be a wild donkey of a man,
- he will be against everyone and everyone against him,
- he will live in hostility toward all his brothers.

(Muslims consider Abraham to be their father, and trace their lineage through Ishmael.) Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born.

[GENESIS 17]

This chapter completes the details of the covenant God has made with Abram. Many would choose to ignore this account because it places conditions upon God's promise to Abram. Literally hundreds of books have been written throughout the ages declaring God's promises to Abram "unconditional." Were that the case, this chapter would be superfluous. But it is not. It completes the "gospel" of Abram.

God appears to Abram (now 99 years old) and orders him to walk before God—blameless, and proceeds to confirm the covenant by changing Abram's name. As he would be the father of many nations, God changes his name to Abraham.

He further promises:

- to make Abraham fruitful,
- king will come from his lineage,
- to establish His covenant as an everlasting covenant to Abraham and his descendents,
- to give the entire land of Canaan as an everlasting possession to Abraham and his descendents,
- He will be the God of Abraham's descendents.
- God will cause Sarai (now named Sarah) to have a child through whom God would establish His everlasting covenant.

The conditions are as follows:

Abraham and all of his descendents must keep His covenant,

- Abraham, all of his male descendents, and certain others, must be circumcised as a sign of the covenant,
- Uncircumcised males are cutoff from the people as having

broken the covenant.

When Abraham was told that Sarah would conceive, he fell on the ground and laughed! (Could Sarah's age of 90 have anything to do with his reaction?) Abraham asks for the blessing to pass to Ishmael, but God says no. It would be Abraham's seed through Sarah that God would confirm His covenant.

Since Abraham laughed at the thought of Sarah bearing a child, God named him Isaac, which, in the Hebrew means, "he laughed."

God promised Abraham that, although His covenant would be with Isaac, Ishmael also received a blessing from God with the following promises:

- he would be fruitful and increase in numbers,
- he would be the father of twelve rulers,
- God would make him into a great nation.

God repeats, again, that the covenant would not be with Ishmael, but Isaac.

Once again, Abraham obeyed and circumcised his whole family.

[CHAPTER 18]

The Conditions Confirmed

This chapter begins with the Lord and two angels appearing to Abraham. The Lord confirms his promise for Sarah to have a child within one year. Sarah now laughs (and then lies about it!) The astute Bible student will note that the Lord ate "curds, milk, and a calf." (Eating milk and meat together is forbidden by Kosher law.)

The Lord speaks to the angels and discusses informing Abraham about His plans to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. In doing so, God further establishes the criteria for fulfillment of His "everlasting" covenant to Abraham and his descendents:

"For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what He has promised him." (v. 19)

The fact that obedience to the Lord was a requirement for the fulfillment of the "everlasting" covenant does not make the promise any less "everlasting" but shows that if the covenant is not fulfilled it will not be God's withdrawal, but rather disobedience on the part of Abraham's descendents.

Even if the reader disagrees with these conclusions, the complete history of Israel shows that this is exactly what eventually happened (first with Assyria, then with Babylon.)

Once Abraham learns of God's plan to destroy Lot's home, Sodom and Gomorrah, he dialogues with God as one would do respectfully with an elder. He is able to get the Lord to concede to spare Sodom "but for ten!" Abraham's righteousness was granted by God on the basis of Abraham's faith. Ours, today, is on the basis of Christ. Yet, do we "approach the throne with confidence"?

[GENESIS 22]

After Isaac is born, God tests Abraham by asking him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering on Mt. Moriah. As a result of his faithfulness to God's command, not only was Isaac spared, but God again swears by Himself to fulfill his promises to Abraham, and firmly decides that it would be through his lineage that the Messiah would come (v.18).

Continued on Next Page

Continued from Previous Page

[GENESIS 24-25]

Abraham, now well advanced in years, carefully selects a wife for his son Isaac by sending his servant to his own family. God miraculously determines who it will be and the servant returns with Rebekah.

Abraham dies at the age of 175, but before doing so, he sends away all of his sons from another wife, Keturah. Hagar and Ishmael had already been sent off by Abraham at God's direction (21:12). Although God made it perfectly clear that it is through Isaac that his offspring would be reckoned, because Ishmael was Abraham's son, he would also make him into a great nation. The sons of Ishmael "lived in hostility towards all their brothers" (v.18) and continue to do so to this day!

God chose Abraham because God knew he would be obedient. Abraham was tested and passed. God would now continue to bless his seed with the covenant promises through Isaac. Abraham, although originally from Ur, became known as a "Hebrew" having lived in Hebron. Abraham was not, however, an "Israelite" nor "Jewish" for reasons that will follow.

GOD RENEWS HIS COVENANT WITH ISAAC

[GENESIS 26]

There was a famine in the land and Isaac, together with his family, traveled to Gerar. God appeared to Isaac and told him not to go to Egypt. God then tells Isaac that he would:

- be with him and bless him,
- give the lands to him and his descendents,
- confirm the oath He swore to Abraham
- make Isaac's descendents as numerous as the stars
- bless all nations through his offspring. [Messiah]

Furthermore, God promises all of this to Isaac, not because of Isaac's righteousness, but because Abraham obeyed God. This is not to say that, for example, Isaac disobey God and go to Egypt that God would not reconsider. God would have to, because, undoubtedly, Isaac would have been killed. Hence the warning to stay in Gerar.

But what did God know about Isaac? That when God appeared to him in Beersheba (v.23) and, once again, confirmed the covenant with him "for the sake of Abraham," Isaac built an altar and "called on the name of the Lord." The apple didn't fall far from the tree. Isaac, son of Abraham, was also a Hebrew.

[GENESIS 27]

Isaac had two sons, Esau, firstborn, and Jacob. Although the firstborn son received the inheritance rights by custom in the East, it would be God who would ultimately make that decision. The lineage and promise could go to either son, but Esau would make the choice an easy one for God, although it had already been prophesied that "the older would serve the younger" (25:23). Esau had already "sold" his birthright for a pot of red stew and intermarried with the people of the land—something that Abraham made his servant swear not to permit Isaac to do.

Through the famous deception, Jacob obtained Isaac's bless-

ing of the firstborn resulting in his departure back to Rebecca's home where God makes the distinction between Jacob and Esau clear. Esau continues to marry Hittite and Canaanite women perhaps even to intentionally annoy his mother following the deception that she orchestrated concerning the firstborn blessing.

Jacob, sadly, never sees his mother again but goes to Haran, to Laban, his mother's brother to find a wife. Esau, settled in the hill country of Seir in a land called Edom (red), which was Esau's other name. His offspring would be called the Edomites. On his journey to Haran, Jacob dreams of the ladder coming down from heaven upon which angels were ascending and descending.

JACOB MEETS GOD

[GENESIS 28 CONTINUED]

At the top of the ladder stood the Lord. He said to Jacob, that He was the God of his father Abraham and Isaac. Note that "father" is not restricted to immediate parent. God then proceeds to confirm the covenant with Jacob. He promises to:

- give him the land in all directions,
- give him descendents as the "dust of the earth,"
- bless all peoples of the earth through him [Messiah],
- be with, watch over, and bring him back to this land.

What did God know of Jacob's character that enabled Him to make these promises? Jacob said, in reply, "the Lord will be my God." (v. 21). Jacob names that place Beth-El. (The house of God).

[GENESIS 29- 31]

Jacob arrives at the home of Laban and is "deceived" into marrying two sisters, Leah and Rachel. Interestingly, the name Jacob means "deceiver." He proceeds to have eleven children through Leah, Rachel, and their two hand-maidens, Zilpah and Bilhah. After 20 years, he decides to run away from Laban and after a final encounter in the hill country of Gilead, Laban and Jacob depart.

[GENESIS 32]

JACOB STRUGGLES WITH GOD

On his way back to Canaan, Jacob prepares to meet his brother Esau. One night he separates himself from his wives and eleven sons and sleeps alone. Here he encounters an angel of God with whom he wrestles until daybreak. Jacob demands a blessing from the angel who wrenches his hip from the socket with a mere touch.

There, Jacob receives an unusual blessing.

"JACOB" BECOMES "ISRAEL"

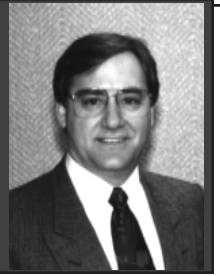
His name is changed from Jacob to Israel, meaning, one who struggles with God. Jacob, then, is a Hebrew because of his lineage to Abraham, and is now the father of the Israelite nation. Jacob's sons will be called the tribes of Israel. Neither Abraham, Isaac, nor Jacob, however, can be called Jews.

NEXT ISSUE:

THE SONS OF ISRAEL

Home Missions

by Rev. John Ferguson



HOME missions—or missions stateside is all about church planting. Here are listed **TEN GREAT OBSTACLES** to the formation of new churches here in America.

Where do you weigh-in on the issues?

1. Who is Responsible?

“We don’t believe it is our responsibility.”

God created all living organisms to reproduce after their own kind. This means that plants reproduce plants, animals reproduce animals, humans reproduce humans, Christians should reproduce Christians, and churches should reproduce churches.

2. Isn’t Bigger Better?

“We want our church to grow bigger! If we start another church it will hinder our own growth because it will take away from our church and be in competition.”

This view looks at planting another church as losing people. God wants us to view it as investing. Investing is done in faith, believing that there will be a bountiful return.

3. Do We Need More Small Churches?

“I don’t believe that new churches will grow any larger than the other small churches I see.”

Very few large churches started with many. We must believe that God will take our efforts and allow a small church to grow to the size He determines.

4. Shouldn’t We Grow “Big” First?

“We want to ensure our security by being large before we have someone else preaching the same gospel in our town.”

This often is a self-centered attitude; an inward look. Church planting develops outward-looking attitudes that helps one’s church become more evangelistic. Thus, the parent church also grows.

5. We Don’t Have People with Whom to Start a Church!

“I am not aware of any person or persons that God has prepared to receive Christ and/or to be part of a new church.”

It was when the priest stepped into the water that the Jordan began to recede. Sometimes it takes a step

Health Advisory, continued from p. 10

where it is needed. Some scientists object saying that adult stem cells do not grow as quickly as embryonic ones. This objection has little merit if one considers that an innocent life can be spared. Due to the presence of cells in the cord and placenta of newborns, there already are cord blood banks where parents can store the child's own stem cells in case of a future need.

Christians, as well as others, are divided about this issue. The morality and ethics involved in using embryonic stem cells are more than a matter for one's own conscience: federal funding is tied to the stem cell's source.

We have presented the available information and leave the rest up to you. Perhaps the sanctity of human life as it relates to the unborn, will one day gain more value in America's eyes. At stake is the plight of millions of unborn children's lives that will be lost so that their stem cells can be used for experiments.

I think we must remember that when God created Adam's body, He made it to last and designed the amazing system of having these built-in replacement cells. Does man now feel he has the right and power to rethink God's design at the expense of God's most precious children? Since God in His wisdom already created other sources, shouldn't we honor that provision? As Psalm 139:13-16 says:

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

District News, continued from p. 14

corporate fasting, agreeing with us to receive the harvest which God has promised. Finally, we asked for the youth of our district, who feel a call to evangelism or ministry, to join us on this weekend as we personally go door to door throughout the city, inviting them to join us in one of the services. And what were the results? All of heaven rejoiced.

We not only had at least five new conversions (three while going door to door, and two during the Saturday evening service), but there is not one home in Burgettstown, PA that does not know of Christian Assembly. We passed our nearly 1,100 flyers and door hangers as we went throughout the city. On Saturday night during our open tent meeting, you could hear praise and worship throughout Burgettstown. For me, personally, it was an awesome sight to watch as silhouettes of people began growing on the horizon. This drawing of the Spirit even continued on Sunday as there were several new people who came to the morning service. Again, to God be all the praise!



Rev. Rick George

NIAGARA-MOHAWK DISTRICT



At the District Council meeting on October 6th, **Rev. Ken Coburn** was elected District Overseer. "My thanks and gratitude goes to our previous District Overseer, Rev. Charles Gay for being an inspiration to our District and to me personally. He is a shining example of integrity," writes Bro. Coburn.

Rev. David Duncan has been appointed to the position of Secretary/Treasurer.

EASTERN DISTRICT



Rev. Lucian Gandolfo has been elected pastor of Grace Full Gospel Church in Newark, NJ.

THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

If Earth's population was shrunk into a village of just 100 people --with all the human ratios existing in the world still remaining -- what would this tiny, diverse village look like? That's exactly what Phillip M. Harter, a medical doctor at the Stanford University school of Medicine, attempted to figure out. This is what he found. 57 would be Asian 21 would be European 14 would be from the Western Hemisphere 8 would be African 52 would be female 48 would be male 70 would be nonwhite 30 would be white 70 would be non-Christian 30 would be Christian 89 would be heterosexual 11 would be homosexual 6 people would possess 59 percent of the entire world's wealth, and all 6 would be from the United States. 80 would live in substandard housing 70 would be unable to read 50 would suffer from malnutrition 1 would be near death 1 would be pregnant 1 would have a college education 1 would own a computer The following is an anonymous interpretation: Think of it this way. If you live in a good home, have plenty to eat and can read, you are a member of a very select group. And if you have a good house, food, can read and have a computer, you are among the very elite. If you woke up this morning with more health than illness...you are more fortunate than the million who will not survive this week. If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation...you are ahead of 500 million people in the world. If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death...you are fortunate, more than three billion people in the world can't. If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a placeto sleep...you are richer than 75% of this world. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace...you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy. If your parents are still alive and still married...you are very rare, even in the United States. If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful ... you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not. If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder ... you are blessed because you can offer healing touch. If you can read this message, you just received a double blessing in that someone was thinking of you, and furthermore, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read at all. Have a good day, count your blessings, and pass this along to remind everyone else how blessed we all are?

Evangelism—continued from p. 9

Colombia sends a great embrace because it is due to your faithfulness that souls have been brought out of the miry clay and their feet placed on the rock, Christ Jesus.

At the same time we send an S.O.S. to all our faithful supporters. Please extend your prayer time for Colombia and for the Christian Community Church (Comunidad Cristiana de Colombia-C.C.C.) along with their pastoral body. That there may be an increase in the army of angels to hover over the C.C.C. to protect us and that there be a host of angels to provide the material things that are so necessary in order to carry on the work of the Lord in an effective way.

I remember the words of the late Rev. William Wilson, who was the Director of the Full Gospel World Missions. Thirty-one years ago when I was taking my first steps toward the mission field, doing itinerary work, my anxiety was so great to arrive to the mission field, I was ready to leave the homeland with only my fare, and then to go on from there by “faith.” Bro. Wilson did not discourage my objective but he did say this, “You will be so busy doing the work of God that you will not have time to spend days on your knees praying-in your material needs.” How often I remember those wise words. Experience is the best teacher. Bro. Wilson having been a veteran missionary to Africa had well learned the lesson. So I remained on the home front until I was able to raise my support for the field. I never was sorry for obeying.

We come to you with an urgent request. We desperately need a financial boost. It is not our custom to make this request, but we are experiencing a financial “famine” and we need your help. We know that God will repay all your efforts as you respond to this S.O.S. We are believing God for this miracle. He is the Owner of the Vineyard and we continue to work and walk by faith. But faith without works is dead. As Abraham took his only son to offer him as a sacrifice, yet he believed God either to provide the sacrifice or to resurrect his son. We have offered all to the Lord, now He must take it from here.

Once again, we thank you beforehand for the response to this plea. Only eternity will ring forth the results. We send our love and prayers to one and all. God richly bless you and keep you in His love and under His wings. With love and blessings to all,

The Pedraza Family

for Colombia

Please send all offerings designated for the Pedraza Family to:

CCNA Missions Department
1294 Rutledge Road
Transfer, PA 16154

NEWS FROM INDIA

EBENEZER GOSPEL MISSION JOINS CCNA

We are pleased to announce that Pastor Thomas Abraham, President of Ebenezer Gospel Mission has become our latest affiliation.

Our brother has over 125 churches and various projects in need of help.



India has over one-billion souls and the need is great throughout the whole country. We who are blessed must do what we can to meet the need.

Ebenezer Gospel Mission has planted churches in five states of India. It started in Kerala and then began working in Karnataka to the north. Eventually the Lord opened doors for ministry in Tamil Nadu, Orissa, and Andhra Pradesh. Much of their ministry work is conducted among the poorest people of these states. The work is very effective and growing rapidly among the tribal groups in the mountains of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. These tribes have very little contact with the world outside their mountainous region.

TAMIL NADU: Ministry leader is Pastor Arjunan. He came from a low-caste Hindu family. The Lord delivered him and gave him many spiritual gifts. E.G.M. has one Bible school and a Bible College and Seminary in this state. There have been 12 churches planted.

KARNATAKA STATE: There are 15 churches and outreach stations in this state. Pastor Joseph is the ministry leader. This state is one of the most difficult missions fields in India.

ORISSA STATE: There are 18 churches and numerous outreach stations in this state. The work is totally among tribal people.

ANDHRA PRADESH: There are 12 churches in this state and numerous outreach stations—all of them in tribal villages. There needs to be developed a missionary training center here.

KERALA STATE: There are 58 churches and 14 outreach stations in this state. There are many ongoing church planting projects with literacy projects, orphanage ministries, missionary training centers attached to the existing church and outreach stations.

Over the past two years the ministry has doubled in terms of church plantings and souls reached. However, our financial support base needs to grow in proportion to the ministry growth so that we can accomplish more for God’s kingdom. Please send offerings designated for “Ebenezer Gospel Mission” to CCNA Missions Department, 1294 Rutledge Road, Transfer, PA 16154.

To receive a brochure describing in detail the work of E.G.M., please write: Ebenezer Gospel Mission,
299 Roma Avenue,
Staten Island, NY 10306.

Evangelism continued from p. 8

walks and runs. I believe that a great lesson can be learned from the game I play with my son.

The lesson is that there is perhaps nothing more that Our Heavenly Father loves to hear as when we, His children, say I will GO, GO, GO, with the gospel. As a result we enjoy Him and enjoy doing His will.

I would like to assist you in an Evangelistic effort in your church. If invited, I will hold a seminar reflecting the instructions that Jesus gave His disciples. I will use biblical example coupled with personal experience to assist the church in becoming more effective in communicating the gospel of Christ. We will pray for the field of souls, then go out on the streets and share the love of Christ. We can also plan open-air crusades in your community, which could include your praise team or drama ministry. A key consideration when conducting an open-air crusade is to make plans early. If you have this in your heart, please call me well in advance of the event so I can lend my support.

A well-developed Ministry of Evangelism is essential for our churches today. A few things are evident when we examine Jesus' example of the Good Shepherd who leaves the 99 sheep in search of the one lost (Matthew 18:10-14). First, geographical boundaries did not concern this shepherd. His primary purpose was to have all the sheep in the fold. The distance traveled or the mountains did not hinder him. In addition, the shepherd had to be paying strict attention to count all the sheep allotted to his charge, making sure that they were all present and accounted for. Are we willing to go beyond the four walls of our churches to reach those who are lost sheep and have yet to come into the fold? The four walls of the church is not the boundary lines of the territory allotted to us by God. The boundary lines are the four corners of the earth. We as local congregations should see our territory as far beyond the walls of our church. We should consider the homes, streets and places of gathering in our communities as the territory allotted to our charge.

In conclusion, we are to live the words of the old hymn entitled, Bring Them In. The words are as follows: "Hark, 'tis the shepherd's voice I hear out in the desert dark and dreary, calling the sheep who've gone astray far from the Shepherd's fold away. Who'll go and help this Shepherd kind, help Him the wandering ones to find? Who'll bring the lost ones to the fold, where they'll be sheltered from the cold? Out in the desert hear their cry, out in the mountains wild and high, Hark! 'tis the Master speaks to thee, 'Go find My sheep where'er they be.' Bring them in, Bring them in, Bring them in from the fields of sin; Bring them in, Bring them in, Bring the wand'ring ones to Jesus."

Rev. James Cassidy

Bro. Cassidy heads the Department of Evangelism and is Assistant Pastor to Bro. Carmine Zottoli at Faith Bible Church in Mohegan Lake, NY. He welcomes the opportunity to work with CCNA churches to develop evangelistic outreaches and is willing to conduct crusades and meetings. He may be reached at: 914-526-4050 or 845-223-9714.—Ed.

General Overseer's Message continued from p. 4

Many examine themselves by comparing their beliefs with others, or by trying to live up to what is set forth by some man or group. If we profess to truly follow the Lord Jesus, we will heed His words about Scripture; - ***"To the law and the testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them"*** (Isaiah 8:20).

During the year 2002, the celebration of our Christian Heritage, let us carefully examine ourselves as the CCNA Movement, making sure that the spiritual heritage that has been passed on to us by our forefathers, remains pure as God's Word, committed to passing a pure legacy to our present and future generation of children.

It is my prayer that each CCNA pastor, credential holder, and believer, feel the same yearning love and compassion that moved our forefathers, and may we have the courage, the boldness, and faith to do whatever we must before the god who searches our hearts.

Rev John DelTurco
General Overseer

Editorial continued from p. 2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

As we continue in this struggle we must not waver. Christians must be true to God's Word and teach others to do likewise. As for our nation, it may be appropriate to think in terms of, "God Will Bless America, When America Blesses God!"

Rev Eric R Towse,

Editor

